

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 06395 191759Z
ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 06395

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, SHUM, MX
SUBJECT: MEXICAN SECDEF DISCUSSES MEXICAN MILITARY

REF: MEXICO 5681

1. AT A APRIL 14 BREAKFAST HOSTED BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FELIX GALVAN LOPEZ FOR THE MEXICAN SENATE, THE SECDEF SPOKE FOR THE RECORD ON THE MILITARY ROLE IN MEXICO. HIS DENIAL OF MILITARY SUPPORT FOR THE BRIGADA BLANCA (COUNTER-TERRORIST GROUP) WAS COVERED IN TWO MEXICO CITY DAILIES. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ON SUCH SUPPORT, EXCELSIOR QUOTED HIM AS SAYING QUOTE NO SUPPORT, NEITHER MANPOWER NOR EQUIPMENT OF THE ARMY, AIR FORCE OR THE NAVY HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THAT BRIGADE, WHOSE EXISTENCE WE ARE NOT AWARE OF. THEREFORE, ALL THAT IS SAID ABOUT THIS ALLEGED GROUP HAS NO FOUNDATION NOR DOES IT HAVE THE SUPPORT OF OUR INSTITUTIONS. END QUOTE. HE NOTED THAT THE MILITARY AND POLICE WORKED TOGETHER IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKING. HE QUALIFIED THE EXISTENCE OF TERRORIST GROUPS AS DISSIDENT ELEMENTS THAT HAVE A FEW ARMS, AS OCCURS IN ALL COUNTRIES.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MEXICO 06395 191759Z

2. MAKING GOOD USE OF HIS FORUM, GENERAL GALVAN REITERATED HIS POSITION THAT THE MEXICAN MILITARY DOES NOT INTERFERE IN POLITICAL QUESTIONS BUT CONFINES ITSELF TO MAINTAINING ORDER AND PROTECTING THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE NATION. HE SAID THE MEXICAN MILITARY HAS NOT BOUGHT MODERN WEAPONS, AS CHARGED IN SOME PUBLICATIONS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT SEVERAL CAVALRY REGIMENTS ARE BEING MOTORIZED, AND

THAT A NEW ARTILLERY REGIMENT IS BEING FORMED WITH MATERIALS MADE OR ASSEMBLED IN MEXICO. HE NOTED ALSO THAT MEXICO WOULD BUY TRAINING AIRPLANES FOR THE AIR FORCE.
(SEE DAO IR 68640227 77)

3. COMMENT: GENERAL GALVAN'S STATEMENT ON MILITARY SUPPORT FOR THE BRIGADA BLANCA MAY BE READ AS THE OFFICIAL GOM PUBLIC POSTURE ON THE EXISTENCE OF ITS ANTI-TERRORIST ARM - I. E., DENY ITS EXISTENCE. IN REALITY THE BRIGADA BLANCA (AN ELITE MILITARY-POLICE TASK FORCE) HAS OPERATED SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST TERRORIST THREATS AND WILL CONTINUE TO TARGET ITS WORK AGAINST TERRORIST GROUPS, SUPPORTED BY THE MILITARY. IN HIS INSISTENCE ON THE NON-POLITICAL ROLE OF THE MEXICAN MILITARY, GENERAL GALVAN IS FOLLOWING THE LINE HE HAS SET FOR HIMSELF ON MANY PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, AND OPENS HIMSELF TO THE CHARGE OF PROTESTING TOO MUCH.
END COMMENT. LUCEY

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